

[Redacted]
OCI No. 2478/63

50

Central Intelligence Agency
Office of Current Intelligence
6 December 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Israeli-Egyptian Arms Race

1. After an arms race of nearly nine years, Israel's ability to wage conventional warfare is still clearly superior to that of its Arab neighbors, whether the Arabs act singly or in combination. Egypt, as the leading Arab military power, is making efforts to overcome Israel's superiority by developing surface-to-surface missiles (SSM) and by acquiring more modern conventional equipment from the USSR. Even though Egypt by mid-1964 may have missiles capable of reaching Israel, our information on them indicates that they would be few in number and of marginal military value.

[Redacted]

25X1
25X1

2. Egypt's two SSMs, the "Conqueror" and the "Victor," have been developed with the help of Western European--chiefly West German--scientists and technicians.

[Redacted]

25X1

The Egyptians are not likely to be able to produce and deploy more than a few hundred of these missiles over the next five years, and the number available could well be substantially smaller. In view of the inaccuracy, limited payload, and doubtful reliability of these weapons,

State Department review completed

DIA review(s) completed.

25X1

any Egyptian missile attack on Israel would be largely ineffective during this period.

25X1

5. Israel's present military superiority over Egypt and the Arab states collectively is qualitative. The Arabs have more personnel and hardware; Israel's armored force is about the same size as that of Egypt alone. The average strength of the Israeli Army is estimated at 50,000; it is capable of mobilizing to 250,000 within 48 hours. Egypt has the largest Arab army--about 107,000, of which some 31,000 are presently engaged in Yemen. Between 15,000 and 20,000 Egyptian troops are usually deployed in the north-eastern Sinai Peninsula. All told, there are close to 60,000 Egyptian, Syrian, Jordanian, and Lebanese troops regularly deployed in the vicinity of Israel's borders. The Arabs could mobilize to about 465,000, but it would take them six months. For several weeks Israel would be heavily superior.

6. Israel's air force includes 177 French-made jet fighters and 20 French jet light bombers. Its 58 Mirage IIIC jet fighters have approximately the same performance characteristics as the 60 MIG-21s Egypt has, but Israel's aircraft are better maintained and piloted. The Egyptians have about 150 other older MIG fighters, 44 Soviet IL-28 jet light bombers, and 20 Soviet TU-16 bombers. The other Arab air forces have only nuisance value as far as Israel

SECRET

25X1

[redacted]

is concerned. For air defense the Egyptians have acquired a Soviet SAM system consisting of at least eight sites. None is yet operational, however. Egypt also is obtaining from the USSR air-to-air missiles and short-range tactical naval missiles, additional naval craft, and more land armaments.

7. Egypt's continuing acquisition of large quantities of modern Soviet military equipment has prompted Israel to appeal urgently to the US for additional arms support, particularly more modern tanks and missiles.

25X1

[redacted]

25X1

SECRET